

§ 532.249 Minimum rates for hard-to-fill positions.

(a) The lead agency for a wage area may establish the rate of the second, third, fourth, or fifth step of one or more grades of an occupation as the mandatory minimum rate or rates payable by any agency for the occupation at one or more locations within a wage area based on findings that:

(1) The hiring rates prevailing for an occupation in private sector establishments in the wage area are higher than the rate of the first step of the grade or grades of the occupation; and

(2) Federal installations and activities in the wage area are unable to recruit qualified employees at the rate of the first step of the grade or grades of the occupation.

(b) Any authorizations made under paragraph (a) of this section shall be indicated on the regular wage schedule for the wage area.

(c) Any authorizations made under paragraph (a) of this section shall be terminated with the issuance of a new regular wage schedule unless the conditions that warrant the authorizations continue and the new regular wage schedule continues that authorization.

(d) The lead agency, prior to terminating any authorization made under paragraph (a) of this section, shall require the appropriate official or officials at all installations or activities to which the authorization applies to discuss the termination with the appropriate official or officials of exclusively recognized employee organizations representing employees in the affected occupation. The agency officials shall report the results of these discussions to the lead agency.

(e) No employee shall have his/her pay reduced because of cancellation of an authorization made under paragraph (a) of this section.

[46 FR 21344, Apr. 10, 1981. Redesignated at 55 FR 46141, Nov. 1, 1990]

§ 532.251 Special rates.

(a) A lead agency, with the approval of OPM, may establish special rates for use within all or part of a wage area for a designated occupation or occupational specialization and grade, in lieu of rates on the regular schedule. OPM

may authorize special rates to the extent it considers necessary to overcome existing or likely significant handicaps in the recruitment or retention of well-qualified personnel when these handicaps are due to any of the following circumstances:

(1) Rates of pay offered by private sector employers for an occupation or occupational specialization and grade are significantly higher than those paid by the Federal Government within the competitive labor market;

(2) The remoteness of the area or location involved; or

(3) Any other circumstances that OPM considers appropriate.

(b) In authorizing special rates, OPM shall consider—

(1) The number of existing or likely vacant positions and the length of time they have been vacant, including evidence to support the likelihood that a recruitment problem will develop if one does not already exist;

(2) The number of employees who have or are likely to quit, including the number quitting for higher pay positions and evidence to support the likelihood that employees will quit;

(3) The number of vacancies employing agencies tried to fill and the number of hires and offers made;

(4) The nature of the existing labor market;

(5) The degree to which employing agencies have considered or used increased minimum rates for hard-to-fill positions;

(6) The degree to which employing agencies have considered relevant non-pay solutions to the staffing problem, such as conducting an aggressive recruiting program, using appropriate appointment authorities, redesigning jobs, establishing training programs, and improving working conditions;

(7) The impact of the staffing problem on employers' missions;

(8) The level of private sector rates paid for comparable positions; and

(9) As appropriate, the extent to which the use of unrestricted rates authorized under § 532.801 of this part was considered.

(c) In determining at what level to set special rates, OPM shall consider—